



THE BRAILLE MONITOR

Voice of the
National Federation of the Blind

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The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$____(or, "____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: _____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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WORK WITH THE BLIND—WHO ARE THE CONSUMERS, AND WHAT DO THEY WANT?

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

President, National Federation of the Blind

AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND

Cleveland, Ohio, July 25, 1973

It is customary for guest speakers at conventions to say what a pleasure it is to address so distinguished a gathering, and I venerate custom and have respect for tradition. But I must confess that *pleasure* was not the chief emotion I felt in accepting the invitation of your president-elect, Mr. Whitstock. My feeling was rather one of solemn and sober purpose. Nor is pleasure the emotion I expect to arouse in most of you. I hope that I may arouse understanding; I suspect that I may arouse hostility; and I would like to think that, after you have reflected on my remarks, I might even arouse some measure of support.

But none of these is my direct intention. I have a single purpose and a simple one: It is to relate to you the attitudes and expectations of the organized blind with regard to two sets of questions: (1) Who are the consumers in the field of work with the blind, and what do they want? (2) Who are the professionals, and what is their role?

I submit that the consumers are all those on the receiving end of services to the blind—and that the professionals are those on the delivering end. We all know how difficult it is nowadays to make ends meet, but I am here (hopefully with your help) to try. Actually the ends do meet for many of

us as individuals. Thus, most of you are professionals, as members of the AAWB; but many of you are also consumers, as blind persons, and some of you are members of the National Federation of the Blind. I myself am blind and a consumer of services—using talking books, Braille transcription, and the like; but I am also head of a State Agency and, therefore, a professional.

Nevertheless, the two roles—of professional and consumer—are clearly distinct. The professional as such cannot represent the consumer, nor the consumer the professional. I think it ought to be clear that I am not here today in my role as a professional—nor even as a blind person (or consumer)—but rather in my role as a consumer *representative*, as a spokesman for the largest group of consumers by far in the field, the National Federation of the Blind. And I am speaking to you in your role as professionals.

For those of you here who have been doing your professional homework—that is, reading *The Braille Monitor*—most of what I am going to say will be familiar. For the best place to go to find out who the consumers are, what they want, what they *get*, what they're thinking and doing about what they get, and what the agencies are thinking and doing in response is *The*

Monitor. During the last year, in particular, *The Monitor* has been reporting in depth and at length on these issues. For those among you who have *not* done your homework, I would like to dip into those pages and pull out some illustrations.

First, let me talk to you about Florida and Ohio. In both of these States we have had what is virtually a classic microcosm of the dilemma confronting, not just the blind, but all minority groups in America over the past generation who want their rights as citizens but who also want to do the right thing by their community and to live in peace with their neighbors. This matter is so crucial and so urgent that I hope I can find a way to make you not just hear me but understand what I am saying. Listen to me—really listen to me, people, before it is too late—for your own sake, as well as that of the blind. More to the point, listen to the overtones of struggle and frustration on the part of blind men and women, wanting only what we all want—to live their own lives and keep their own livelihood, to do for themselves and to do for others, to be a part of the solution rather than just a part of the problem.

In Florida, for the past many years, the relationship of the State Agency to the blind who are its clients has been on the order of master and servant, or of custodian and ward. Question that if you will, but it has been the traditional pattern until very recently. Moreover, the blind in the sheltered shops and vending stands have generally put up with it, not knowing where to turn or how to protest—or even, in many cases, what alternatives there might be. Then, more suddenly than gradually, the change came: Some of these blind consumers said *no*. What had happened? Probably it was pressure,

brought to bear upon the State Agency for the Blind by the space workers at Cape Kennedy that started the process of change. Maybe it was something else. All we know for sure is that the State Agency made demands upon the blind operators of vending stands at the Cape to make “donations” out of their earnings to the space workers’ recreation fund. The first time this happened, back in ’68, some of the vendors bowed while others tried to resist—although not very confidently or effectively. The next time around, the stand operators were better organized, and they turned to the National Federation of the Blind. With our support they first went to the Federal Agency, and received for their pains what can only be termed a runaround. Next they turned to the courts, and there at last received justice. The courts sustained them in their suit against the State Agency, knocked down the requirement of forced contributions, and restored the right of the individual to make up his own mind and control his own purse strings.

The gist of that battle on the shores of Cape Kennedy—and of the dilemma of the blind consumer which it illustrates—is summarized in a letter that I wrote last September to the then Administrator of the Social and Rehabilitation Service, John Twiname. I would like to read that letter to you, not just as a document in a particular episode but as a symbol of the larger picture: the crisis in services to the blind, and the transformation in the roles of consumer and professional. I wish I could make this picture more vivid than mere words can convey, so that it might produce a shock of recognition and a flash of understanding in all who are here, powerful enough to illuminate the poignant dilemma of the blind consumer and the urgency of

his new demand—which is to make his own decisions, both individually and collectively. Again, I ask you not just to hear me but to listen, with an open mind and a focused attention—listen not to me but to the *blind*. Here, with only minor omissions of detail, is the letter I sent to John Twiname:

DEAR JOHN: This will respond to your letter . . . concerning the Florida vending stand case. What occurred in this situation illustrates the problem blind people (perhaps most persons) have in dealing with government.

You state quite correctly that the Florida Agency responded affirmatively [to the demands of the blind], but the chronology and the implications are not, in my opinion, as your letter would imply. A letter is sent to you. Quite understandably it does not reach you at all but goes to Dr. Newman (your subordinate in charge of the Rehabilitation Services Administration). He, in turn, sends it to the Office for the Blind, the people who would logically deal with any problem affecting blind persons. Of course, our Florida people could have begun by contacting the Office for the Blind themselves. The reason they did not but chose to contact you instead may have significance.

In any case they received the usual generalized letter of response, apparently over the signature (yours) of a person who had neither written nor read it. At the time the letter was written no assurances at all had been secured from the Florida agency, nor had they given (so far as any of us can tell) any explanation of

their unethical, if not illegal, conduct. There is fairly clear and convincing evidence that the Florida Agency has repeatedly for the past several years pressured the vending stand operators on Cape Kennedy into handing over a sizable portion of their income to the recreation fund of the space workers. . . .

Not only as a practical matter but as a philosophical question I ask you this, John: In view of the Florida vending stand case what, in the name of all that is reasonable, can a blind person (or even a strong organization of blind persons) do to get fair play and justice from the Government (or the private agencies)? Must we take to the streets with violence? Is it necessary to burn buildings or go about in mobs shouting obscenities? We want to work within the system, but we also want the people who run the system to be compelled to abide by the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law.

The head of the Florida rehabilitation program is a prominent member of the Council of State Agencies. He can cause problems for the people in your office, and vice versa. He is well dressed, well spoken, and well versed in the intricacies of governmental operations. He has resources at his disposal and influence.

The blind operators, on the other hand, have none of these. They have only themselves and the National Federation of the Blind to rely on. When they are asked to “volunteer” to “donate” large chunks of their income to a recreation fund for Federal employees, what are they to do? In a

similar situation what would you do (assuming that you did not have Federal status or a great many contacts or a good deal of financial backing or an extensive knowledge of your rights)? What would you do if a man in authority called you in and said to you (not in writing and, of course, off the record), "John, wouldn't you like to 'donate?' " What would the head of the Florida Agency do?

The dilemma is real, and it is not pleasant. If the Florida vending stand operators had submitted meekly (as they did for many months), then they would have lost their income and their self-respect. They could even be brought to praise the people and the system that took their money.

If, on the other hand, they should decide to resist (as some of them finally did), then what? They are said to be troublemakers and malcontents. They are "jeopardizing" the program which benefits them, "biting the hand that feeds them," being ungrateful and "rocking the boat."

Following this same line of thought, what am I as a State director of programs for the blind to do when it comes to my attention that blind persons throughout the country are being deprived of their rights and that the laws (both State and Federal) are being violated? For that matter, what is any conscientious State director to do? He knows that the course of popularity and safety lies in saying nothing—"tending to his own business." He knows that there are ways he can be punished if he takes a stand. Every incentive is to play it safe,

ride the fence.

In the same vein, what is a responsible organization of the blind to do? Specifically, what is the National Federation to do? If we speak out for the rights of the blind and the enforcement of the law (as we did in the Florida vending stand case), then we are accused of being "militant," "radical," and "unreasonable." Regardless of how courteously or correctly we behave, we cannot expect the Florida Agency officials to think well of us.

Then we turn to the Federal Agency, the entity charged by Congress with seeing that the States abide by the law and do justly in their dealings with the blind. And then what? We are right back where we started.

This is why the blind have organized. We have had no alternative. This is why the National Federation of the Blind grows and flourishes. This is why (come hell or high water) we intend to continue on our course.

That is what I wrote to John Twinline, the head of the Federal Agency. And what answer do you suppose he made? None at all. In other words, by his silence, he emphasized, exemplified, and pointed up the problem I was trying to get him to consider.

I told him we would continue. And continue we did—all the way to Cleveland, Ohio. Following on the heels of the Florida fiasco came the crisis of Cleveland—and the NFB was compelled to go back once more to the barricades. We did so more in sorrow than in anger, not with pleasure but with

pain, not with rejoicing but with regret. We did so because of action by the Cleveland Society for the Blind duplicating and repeating the outrageous performance in Florida. It is not pleasant for me to stand before you now, in the presence of the very official who brought on the Cleveland crisis, and I have no wish to demean him personally; but there is no way out. The issue raised here in Cleveland, by his action, poses fundamental questions of constitutional rights and legislative protection. It cannot be brushed under the rug; it cannot be conveniently ignored; it will not go away. Sooner or later it must be faced, and recognized, and settled. I assure you that, one way or another—peacefully and cooperatively, or through open conflict—it *will* be settled.

That issue, in its Cleveland version, bears directly on the powers of the professional and the rights of the consumer. Does the administrator have the authority to oversee and direct the so-called “voluntary” contributions of blind clients to public fundraising drives? Does he have the right (in the guise of the rule-making power conferred upon him by the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act) to reduce vending stand operators to virtual peonage—to tell them how often they must go to the dentist, what deodorants they may use, and even when they will change their underwear? Read the Cleveland Society’s own rules as reprinted in the February, 1973, *Monitor* to see whether I exaggerate. Can the agency manipulate withholdings from the earnings of vending stand operators to exceed federally approved levels for the State? Can this be done in the name of providing extra services—even when some of the operators say they don’t want or need the services—even when they feel the services are too high and they

could provide them more cheaply themselves? The fact of the extra “service charge” is not even denied. Can vending stand operators determine their own contributions to the United Torch Drive and keep the amount of their donations confidential? Can they control their own lives? Not in this town, not in the programs of the Cleveland Society for the Blind—not, that is, unless the courts say so.

And what are blind consumers, such as the Cleveland snack bar operators, to do in the face of such pressures and threats from program administrators? Can they petition the administrator? They did, and were thoroughly rebuffed. Can they go to the State Agency for redress of their grievance? They did, and were spurned. Can they then stand and fight? They can, and they did. They also turned in the one direction they knew to turn—to the National Federation of the Blind. Of course, we responded—in various ways, including support of the operators who wished to take the case to court. What I said at that time in *The Monitor*, in announcing the Federation’s entry into the case, is worth repeating here:

When the rights of one of us are threatened, the rights of all of us are threatened. This is the bedrock principle of Federationism. We stand together, and we do it meaningfully. . . .

It is not merely vending stand operators who are threatened in the present instance, however. It is all blind people, all independent organizations of the blind, and all progressive agencies and programs.

I also pointed out that the course we had embarked upon across the land—the ending

of custodialism forever and the enforcement of equality—would mean some hard traveling. It has. In Florida, in Cleveland, and likewise in “NAC.” NAC, as you know, is the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped—an unofficial, private body set up by the American Foundation for the Blind several years ago as a self-proclaimed arbiter and judge of the merits and failings of all who labor in the field of work with the blind. From the outset, despite the stacked deck dealt by the Foundation, the organized blind have tried to make something real and responsible out of NAC by attempting to reform its structure to allow meaningful representation of the blind. In short, we have tried to talk consumerism to them—and where else could this be a more vital or pertinent issue? Yet, our attempts have been turned back; our entreaties have been turned down; our appeals have been turned away—our very representative character as a movement has been denied.

Here is a letter—I won’t read it all—which summarizes the crisis of confidence and the credibility gap existing in NAC between the controlling professional members and the consumers of the organized blind movement. It was written by me to NAC’s president, Dr. Peter J. Salmon, and was published in the March, 1973, issue of *The Braille Monitor*. Here is what the letter says:

[Dr. Salmon], I now raise with you again the questions in [my] December 12 letter and ask that you give me a direct response. . . . “NAC either is or is not interested in talking to the organized blind about the issues we have raised. Top level NAC officials either will or will not meet with us for

such a discussion. These are reasonably clear-cut issues. Therefore, I request once again that you follow through on your letter of November 22 and that a meeting be arranged for the purposes indicated. . . . In any case I now ask you whether NAC will or will not do these things.”

I went on in my letter to take note of the fact that—while Dr. Salmon had not seen fit to respond to any of the questions, suggestions, and invitations on the part of the organized blind—he had sent to us a curious document entitled “Report of a Tentative Proposal for the Development of Standards for Consumer Participation,” by one Mr. Topitzer, and he had said of it: “We are confident that [the Federation’s] membership will be very interested in the enclosed statement on consumer participation. If your editorial policy permits, we respectfully suggest that you include this statement in *The Monitor*.”

I said in my reply to Dr. Salmon that he was entirely right: “The members of the Federation certainly will be interested in the statement. . . . We will want every blind person in this country, and every friend of the blind, to see this document and study it carefully.” And I went on to say:

Although I have told you, Dr. Salmon, that your letters were “unresponsive,” “strange,” and “astounding,” I confess that I cannot find the superlatives to describe the “Report of a Tentative Proposal for the Development of Standards for Consumer Participation,” by Mr. Topitzer. Is one, for instance, really intended to take seriously a sentence like the following: “Increased consumer involvement can promote a

cooperative relationship or partnership between service provider and service user that would insure more valid assessment of need, improved communication and feedback between two reciprocal components to validate program and service, insure their relevance, and make the agency more responsive."

Or this, still quoting from the NAC document:

"Let us then begin by asking, who is the consumer? We must recall that this concept is borrowed from the field of economics where it refers generally to such things as the right of the purchaser to know the contents of the cereal package. Are we taking liberties by applying this same term to the recipient of complex psychosocial services provided by a trained professional?"

From all this high-flown jargon [I said in my letter] one would think we were dealing with very mysterious and arcane subject matter. Such is not really the case at all, of course. As most normal human beings would understand the term, "consumers" of the services of NAC and the other agencies working with the blind are blind persons. A "consumer representative" is a person elected by a truly representative organization of the blind to speak for the blind. Such a person would probably be blind himself, but if the consumers chose, they could conceivably elect a sighted person as their representative.

I went on to assure the president of NAC that it is not only the National Federation of the Blind which finds trouble with that

double-talk about what a consumer or a consumer representative really is.

The National Rehabilitation Association, for instance (an organization not totally composed of NFB members and radical militants), has something to say on the subject in its publication *The Journal of Rehabilitation* for September/October 1972. Their definitions of a consumer and a consumer representative are very clear and right on target—not at all the sort of thing Mr. Topitzer might have written.

On the inside of the front cover of the magazine is an editorial entitled "Consumer Involvement in NRA." I quote to you from it:

"Definition: (a) A consumer is defined as an individual who by reason of his disability is eligible for, may require, or is a recipient of some kind of human service including medical, rehabilitation, housing, transportation, et cetera, as provided by an agency.

"(b) A consumer group is defined as a group of consumers who have joined together for the general welfare of their membership.

"(c) A consumer representative is an individual who represents a constituency, who is elected by them, and accountable to them."

After contrasting that straightforward set of definitions with NAC's compound fracture of the language, I continued in my letter to Dr. Salmon as follows:

NAC purports to set standards for

agencies doing work with the blind. Its activities affect the lives of all blind people—the child, the student, the sheltered shop worker, the agency client, the agency employee, the senior citizen, the self-employed, and the housewife—all of us. Despite the fact that a token number of blind people are on the NAC Board, “representatives” of the blind are conspicuous by their absence. As blind people, we have had enough of the double-talk and the evasion, and we simply will not tolerate the situation any longer. Representatives of the blind were not allowed meaningfully to participate in the establishment of NAC or its standards, and they are not now allowed meaningfully to participate in its operation. We want all of this changed, and we think that what we ask is reasonable.

As with other minority groups, it is possible for those who wish to maintain the status quo or deny the existence of the problem to try to confuse the issue. We, too, have our Uncle Toms. We have tokenism; we have efforts to divide and conquer; we have attempts to buy off the troublemakers; we have threats and intimidations; we have professional-sounding studies and reports; we have impressive meetings and conferences; we have pleas for understanding and delay; we have talk about “positive and constructive action”; we have the force and prestige of tradition and custom; and we have a hundred other delays and obstacles. But we will not be put down, and we will not remain silent. NAC affects our lives, and we are going to make it responsive to us.

Referring to the NAC-sponsored paper on consumerism as “an affront and an insult,” I said in my letter that it mattered little what NAC decided to call the organized blind. “Call us what you will,” I said.

Call us “radicals”; call us “troublemakers”; call us “rabble rousers”; or simply call us blind people with a cause who intend to be heard. Call us whatever you want to; but be warned, and heed what we say to you. You may have peace and cooperation if you will treat us like human beings and work with us constructively and with understanding; or you may have war and the bitterness of hell itself if you continue on your present course. You cannot intimidate us; you cannot double-talk us; you cannot ignore us; and you cannot flimflam us. . . . There is still time, but the time is running out.

That is what I said in my letter to Dr. Salmon, the president of NAC—and that is what I say to you here today. It is also, in slightly different words, what I was saying in the November, 1972, *Monitor*, when I reported on a meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind held in Washington last fall. I am a member of that committee, and at the November meeting I found myself very much in the minority. Why? It could be, of course (as the NAC officials contend), that I have merely gone mad in the pursuit of power and do not represent the blind at all. This is their monotonous response to every attempt to discuss the issues. They persist—or pretend to persist—in this belief in spite of actions to the contrary by hundreds of local Federation chapters throughout the country, thousands of delegates at recent NFB Conventions, and tens of thousands of blind men and women

in every part of the land. It could be simply because I am mean, or hard to get along with, or (as one agency official once said) just a "maverick"; but I think the problem (as exemplified by the meeting of the National Advisory Committee last fall) goes deeper than that. Here is how I summed it up, from my point of view, in *The Monitor*:

The problem with the entire two-day session was one of perspective. More than once I had the feeling that Dr. MacFarland and others felt that they would like to concentrate on the "important" things, the "real" and "central" issues affecting the blind and that the things I wanted to talk about were distractive and peripheral. I think they were sincere in this feeling and not just trying to be unpleasant. The problem is that I felt the same way about what they wanted to discuss. Under such circumstances it is difficult, indeed, to have any meaningful meeting of the minds, regardless of how well disposed one may be. . . . It is not pleasant to be in the minority, and one does not like to have to insist on discussing matters which others in the room would rather avoid. Regardless of how good-tempered or reasonable one tries to be, he tends to be viewed with hostility in such circumstances. As I say, it is not pleasant, but there is simply no alternative. Certain things have to be said.

At this point, surely, it is clear just who I think the consumers are, and what they want. In this connection you will observe that I have not dealt with that dwarf counterfeit of the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind. Those who know them at all

recognize them for what they are—puppets of the more reactionary agencies—a company union—"alone and afraid in a world they never made"—doomed, despite all their flutter and noise to the contrary, to play no real part in the final drama between the organized blind and the agencies, between the consumer and the professional.

As I bring these remarks to a close, let me say a few words to those agencies and agency people—there are a growing number of them—who march with us in the cause of freedom, who are glad to see the blind emancipated, and who work with us as human beings—not as statistics or case histories or inferior wards. To such agencies I say this: You have nothing to fear from the organized blind movement. Your battles are our battles. Your cause is our cause. Your friends are our friends. Your enemies are our enemies. We will go with you to the legislatures and the Federal Government to secure funds for your operation. We will urge the public to contribute to your support. We will defend you from attack and work with you in a partnership of progress.

If there are any in this hall today who still think that I am addressing them as foes rather than as hoped-for friends, let me make a last attempt to correct that impression. In fact, I would like to think of all of you here today as potentially part of our movement, rather than apart from it—as allies rather than antagonists. Your lives and careers are bound up with the march of the blind out of the shadows of segregation and shelter into the mainstream of society. Whatever your professional distance from us, whatever your private feelings about personalities, basically I have to believe you are with us—that in your

hearts you know we are right. I believe that you want the blind not just to survive, nor even merely to endure, but to prevail. I believe you want us to put an end to dependency, to rejoin society, to take our rightful place as equal partners and responsible citizens in the great enterprise that is America. If you agree, then you are with us.

What I ask of you today—you, this group of professionals—is only this: that you fulfill the promise inherent in your own name, the “American Association of Workers for the Blind”: in other words that, as good *Americans*, you try *association* with us, the consumers, and thereby truly become *workers for* and *with the blind*.

NEW CHIEF FOR THE
DIVISION FOR THE BLIND
AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED,
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

by
Florence Grannis

[Editor's Note.—Mrs. Grannis is Assistant Director in Charge of Library and Social Services, Iowa Commission for the Blind.]

Frank Kurt Cylke (pronounced Silky) has been appointed as successor to Robert Bray as the Chief, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress. (As most of the *Monitor* readers know the Library of Congress contracts for the production of books and machines for distribution to the fifty-one regional libraries for the blind in the United States.) Mr. Bray retired December 11, 1972, after massive surgery and Mr. Cylke assumed his duties July 16. Mr. Silky has been with the

Library of Congress since January of 1970. He has sixteen years varied experience in library work—with the United States Office of Education, with public libraries and with a private school. He is a native of New Haven, Connecticut, a graduate of the University of Connecticut, and of Pratt Institute (New York).

We look forward to becoming acquainted with Mr. Cylke and we wish him well.

Charles Gallozzi, Assistant Chief during Mr. Bray's administration and Acting Chief since his resignation, will continue as Assistant Chief under Mr. Cylke.

DON'T KICK THE POST OFFICE

by
Florence Grannis

As early as 1905, it was recognized that special postal laws were needed so that “books for the blind” could be mailed at less than regular postal rates for that category of merchandise. The evolution of these special postal laws went hand in hand with the general evolution of libraries for the blind so that now Braille books, large-type books, recorded books, machines on which to play the books, paper and tape for the production of books, may all go free. Does this mean, then, that *every* mail service connected with library service for the blind is available and free? No. The law *does not* require that Post Office personnel pick up books from the individual's home and return them to the Post Office for forwarding back to the library.

Today it is a sport to abuse all branches of government and the United States Postal Service surely has had problems, and

perhaps it is endemic to modern life that the wheels of service grind increasingly slowly—that while there is more and more need for items to be mailed, there is less and less ability to cope with the whole bag of mail, so that “neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds” is a travesty of what occurs.

So, postmen are not required to pick up books from the blind reader's home and take them to the Post Office and this causes hardship—sometimes people discontinue reading—they view the whole situation as hopeless. Is it? No. Overwhelmingly, the Post Office people are good guys. If you have this problem and find it a hardship, you might phone the Parcel Post Division of the Post Office and explain the situation. Use sweet reason—a touch of honey—try this solution—you will like it—it works!

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED
MEETS AGAIN**

by
Kenneth Jernigan

As Federationists know, officials of the Department of HEW made an attempt two or three years ago to do away with what was then the Division for the Blind in the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. This brought combined resistance from almost every group having anything to do with the blind. The Division was not eliminated. Instead, it became the Office for the Blind and continues under the leadership of Dr. D. C. MacFarland

who, while we may not always agree with him, seems to me to be definitely trying to do a good job. He certainly does not exhibit the unvarying and senseless hostility toward the organized blind demonstrated by some (thank goodness, a decreasing number) of the more reactionary agencies in the field. Instead, he is personally friendly and cooperative.

One of the results of the abortive effort to eliminate the Division for the Blind was the establishment of the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. The committee (appointed by the Secretary of HEW) consists of seventeen people, of whom Professor James Nyman and I are the only Federationists. As will be remembered, the ACB (though probably a twentieth or thirtieth our size) also has two representatives—Judge Reese Robrahn and Miss Betty Ann Jones. The remaining members of the group represent a variety of agencies and, in some instances, just themselves. It makes for interesting meetings—sometimes productive, sometimes not.

I was unable to attend the first meeting, which was held in early 1972. A second meeting occurred last fall. I did attend that one, and my impressions were reported in the November, 1972, *Monitor*. Now the committee has held a third meeting (June 4-5, 1973); and, again, I was present.

To begin with, I would say that this meeting was a good deal more productive and worthwhile than the one last fall. As far as I am concerned, the highlight of the morning session of the first day was the report made by Mr. Corbett Reedy, the Acting Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. To the best of my

memory, I had never met Mr. Reedy before. He seemed genuine and refreshingly devoid of the long, meaningless sentences which so often characterize Federal officials—almost like a disease, certainly a plague. Since Mr. Reedy will be at the NFB Convention this summer (I am writing this in mid-June) and will be talking somewhat along the same lines he did to the committee, I will not attempt to summarize what he said about the future of rehabilitation and will hope we can carry his remarks verbatim in *The Monitor*. Suffice it to say here that he spoke to the point and quit when he was finished.

At the lunch break I met with Dr. Peter Salmon, the president of NAC, to see whether we really had anything to discuss. As might have been predicted, we didn't—at least not meaningfully or productively. Dr. Salmon lives in a bygone era as far as the blind are concerned—so much so that he doesn't even know it or, apparently, consider the possibility that it might be true. It would be humorously touching and could be regarded as nothing more than pathetic if it did not have such an adverse effect on the lives of the blind.

Anyway, we sat down at the table and began. Several other people (including Professor Nyman) were present. I reminded Dr. Salmon that I had asked him repeatedly (in writing and officially) whether we could have observers at the NAC meeting this summer and that he had consistently avoided giving me an answer. I went on to say that his last letter had seemed particularly equivocal since it had said we could attend the annual meeting and dinner, Wednesday, June 20, but had not even mentioned the board meeting the next morning. NAC's "annual meeting" has always been open, of course, but is not at

all substantive, being a mere formality and a ceremonial occasion.

Dr. Salmon then told me that the NAC Board had decided that its meeting June 21 (the one at which all the business would be transacted) would be closed and that we would not be permitted to have observers present. I asked him whether he had deliberately omitted this fact from his letter to me. He said he had. I asked him whether he regarded this as an attempt at deception. He said he didn't.

I pursued the matter, telling him I did not see how the NAC Board could possibly have made such a decision since our observers at the December, 1972, meeting reported no such action. He said NAC's executive committee had made the decision and that it had the power. I wanted to know if he did not feel his letter might be misleading in view of such a change of policy—especially if one considers the representations NAC and HEW officials have been making all winter to Members of Congress about "openness." He said he didn't.

We discussed the language in his letter to the effect that NAC standards require that sheltered workshops pay wages commensurate with those paid for comparable work in the area and that wages paid by regular commercial establishments must be taken into account and, further, that Federal standards must be met. I asked him whether this did not mean to the ordinary, literate human being that the standard required payment of at least the Federal minimum wage. He said it didn't. We both agreed that many of the sheltered shops do not pay as much as the Federal minimum wage. He said he would read the correspondence again to see

whether it was misleading. Not only was the letter misleading but the NAC standard itself is misleading—deliberately so, in my opinion.

Since we seemed to be getting nowhere, I asked Dr. Salmon what course of action he would suggest the blind follow regarding NAC. His only answer seemed to be things we should *not* do. We should not demonstrate; should not write articles; should not make demands, et cetera. In other words, we should leave NAC alone to operate as usual.

Perhaps he showed more about himself and NAC than he knew in his comments concerning the NAC meeting last December. Although I obviously cannot quote the exact words (in fact, I must emphasize that this is a paraphrase and my own impression and best memory), he said something to this effect:

We let you have observers at the meeting last December and then, instead of expressing gratitude, you kept writing articles about how bad NAC is and all that is wrong with it. When you invite someone to dinner, you don't expect him to send you a letter telling you what is wrong with all your relatives.

I told him that, as we in the Federation see it, his statements exemplify the problem. "You are not our patrons," I said. "We felt we had a right to be at that meeting and that NAC deserved no particular credit for finally and grudgingly giving in."

With some annoyance he said that I was "twisting" his statements again. He then got away from NAC entirely and made a

few comments on general subjects—the fact that he had been with the Industrial Home for the Blind in Brooklyn for more than fifty years, how much he made per week when he first started working, et cetera. Then he left the table.

The problem with attempts at dealing with NAC and agencies of its ilk is that they seem to want to reduce all issues to matters of personality and to say that there would be no problem at all if they were not confronted by bad and unreasonable people—particularly, the NFB President and, any other national, State, or local leaders or members of the Federation who happen to be involved at the moment. On the other hand, I believe that, regardless of personality, there are real issues and that they must be dealt with. It is not that Peter Salmon is a bad man with evil motives. So far as I know, he is not. He is personable and seems to want to be friendly—as long, that is, as we keep in our place and don't try to make NAC responsive or responsible.

Anyway, back to the meeting of the National Advisory Committee. The highlight of the afternoon session of the first day was a presentation called "Social Security Amendments Affecting the Blind and the Visually Handicapped, Titles XVI, II, and VI." It was informative, constructive, and worthwhile. Since top Social Security people will be at the NFB Convention in New York to give an expanded version of this topic, I will say no more about it here. Full details will be carried in *The Monitor* later.

The morning session of the second day (Tuesday, June 5) featured a talk by Mr. Reedy on the future of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and by officials of the Office for the Blind on their work and

plans for the future. Some of it was informative; some of it wasn't.

At lunch I sat at a rather large table with (among others) Betty Jones, one of the ACB representatives. We talked about NAC; and I asked her why, at the last meeting, she had moved to prevent a discussion of NAC on the agenda for the next meeting. She said she had done some thinking about her position since that time, and she felt perhaps she had been wrong. She said she thought I should bring the matter up again and that she would support a motion to place NAC on the agenda for our fall, 1973, meeting.

The afternoon session was taken up with a general discussion by the committee of whatever people wanted to talk about. Reese Robrahn, past president of ACB, moved that we express concern about the phase-out of Federal funds for rehab staff training and development. I seconded the motion, perhaps making history in some sort of minor way since it is one of the few times in my memory when Mr. Robrahn and I have been on the same side of a question. Later, however, we more nearly reverted to type. The current Federal Administration is drastically cutting and rapidly phasing out much of the so-called "Research and Demonstration," which has been so dear to the hearts of rehab officials and others in the field in recent years. In other words the Federal money is being withdrawn; and great are the howls, and loud are the screams.

Miss Jones (at least, I believe it was she) made a motion deploring this and putting the committee on record accordingly. I said that I felt that much of what had been funded in the name of "Research" had done more harm than good and, for that

reason, I would vote against the motion. Needless to say, the motion carried.

Then we came to NAC. I said that I thought the committee should deal with the subject at its next meeting. Someone remarked that it seemed a shame to use the time in that manner—especially when there were such *important* issues facing us: how many staff members the Office for the Blind has, the cut in funds for "Research and Demonstration," et cetera. I replied that, in my opinion, NAC was the most important single issue facing the blind today. I believe my view was in the minority.

In any case, I offered the motion, and it was seconded by Reese Robrahn and then adopted without opposition. It was agreed that an hour and one-half would be allotted to a discussion of NAC at the next meeting—thirty minutes for the affirmative, thirty minutes for the negative, and thirty minutes for general discussion. Of course, when one considers the makeup of the National Advisory Committee, the outcome of the discussion at the next meeting is virtually a foregone conclusion.

The committee is not at all representative; and, regardless of the merits, the ACB-NAC combination will have the votes. They can pass or defeat anything they choose—which will prove nothing except, perhaps, that you can get any vote you want if you can decide who will do the voting and if you are not accountable. Witness NAC. In fact, if the NAC-ACB forces had been thinking a little more clearly, they would have permitted the discussion of NAC to occur when I first brought it up last fall. They could have listened (even politely) to whatever Professor Nyman and I wanted to say, and

then could have put the committee on record strongly endorsing NAC, after a so-called "full" and "fair" discussion. In that context, and as that particular committee is structured, they had the votes. They had them then, and they have them now. They will have them this fall. They were slow on the uptake, and it took them almost a year; but they finally caught on and figured it out. We shall see what the fall meeting brings.

There were a variety of other items which were discussed, but I have given the highpoints of the meeting—at least, as I saw them. Sometime during the second day I talked with Dr. MacFarland about the decision by NAC to close its June board meeting. Not only is he the head of the Office for the Blind, which is part of the HEW structure helping finance NAC, but he is also a member of NAC's board. He told me (and I feel absolutely convinced he was telling the truth) that he had not known of the NAC decision to close the meeting until the night before. This was several hours after I (not exactly a NAC insider) had learned of it from Dr. Salmon. What a commentary!

So another meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped has come and gone. It was much more constructive and worthwhile than the previous meeting. Still it left a great deal to be desired insofar as actually dealing with the real issues confronting the blind. The committee is not all bad, and certainly it has many members who are sincerely interested in promoting the well-being of the blind. It also has many members who are almost totally uninformed and who represent nobody but themselves. It has other members who have too many axes to grind

to permit them to admit certain facts of life or see things as they are. Even with all of this, the very existence of the committee may constitute progress—or it may not. It is simply too early to tell.

IDAHO CONVENTION

Idaho's convention formerly "happened" in August. This year it was decided that it should "happen" in May. And it did. The thirty-eighth annual convention of the organized blind movement in the Gem State was gavelled to order by President Ruth Shove the morning of May 26—committee meetings and a social having taken place the night before—and it didn't stop "happening" until late afternoon on Sunday, May 27.

At this year's convention there was time to reflect upon and rejoice over our victories, and even greater time was spent confronting issues which lie before us and establishing directions to resolve them. During the 1973 legislative session, we in Idaho obtained passage of the Little-Randolph-Sheppard Act. Our work to improve library services for blind persons in our State resulted in the legislative decision to establish a library serving the blind and physically handicapped in Boise as a part of the Idaho State Library. Miss Helen Miller, State Librarian, brought to us her plans to establish library services effective July 1, 1973, and a desire to work together to provide the highest caliber of library services. Welcoming Miss Miller's remarks and approach to the provision of library services, the convention pledged cooperation through our participation. To this end we resolved to seek the

establishment of an advisory committee of which one-third of the members would be representatives of the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho.

In the legislative session of 1968, a plan was developed to reorganize State government which included placing Idaho's newly created Commission for the Blind in an umbrella agency. In every legislative session since, there have been attempts to reorganize State government in Idaho. All of this activity resulted in a decision by the voters in November of 1972 to mandate reorganization of State government to consist of no more than twenty agencies by January 1, 1975. This by far constitutes the most serious reorganization threat to the Idaho Commission for the Blind ever faced by blind Idahoans. Our resolve to maintain the Commission as one of the twenty agencies was unanimous and vigorous.

With the passage of H.R. 1, the future of the welfare program—assistance payments, social services, eligibility for these services, and related matters—is of considerable interest to blind persons in Idaho. To this end, representatives of both the Social Security Administration and the Department of Environmental and Community Services (the agency in Idaho presently administering the welfare program) addressed us concerning probable program changes. Mr. Harold Smith, representative from D.E.C.S., announced the Governor's and the Department's intention to maintain Idaho's current grant level. The maximum grant to a blind person in Idaho, including the value of food stamps, is in excess of \$180. The convention unanimously passed a resolution to assist D.E.C.S. and the Governor in obtaining an adequate

appropriation at least to maintain this level. Several other resolutions of considerable importance were passed unanimously. One requested the Social Security Administration to use the concept of Homestead—as it is most commonly understood—in the determination of the value of a home as part of the criteria for eligibility for income maintenance. Another resolution called upon the Social Security Administration to establish regulations which would allow blind persons to apply for a category of their choice, without respect to age, so as to insure maximum benefits and referral to agencies providing additional services.

The report from the School for the Deaf and the Blind, made to the organization by Lee Robinson, Assistant Superintendent, included discussion of the establishment of an itinerant program to serve Idaho's blind children in their local school districts. This item generated considerable discussion. The Federation understood the policy statement governing this program and newspaper releases by Mr. Robinson to indicate that the determination upon which a child could attend the resource program or the residential school for the blind would be made upon degree of sight or lack thereof. Our organization, acting on its knowledge and experience, through resolution, called upon the Board of Education to change the criteria upon which a blind child could stay in the resource program, to establish positive expectations for the child, and to establish the program to assure maximum integration and development of independence.

As a result of a discussion of the activities of NAC and our need to destroy that agency as it now exists or to alter it to the

end that it is truly responsive to the needs of blind persons in Idaho as well as across the Nation, we unanimously resolved to oppose the accreditation of any agency in Idaho serving the blind and voted to send Dick Jones as our representative to demonstrate against the activities of NAC in its meeting in Chicago on June 20 and 21. The National Federation of the Blind of Idaho has already received letters of concern over the activities of NAC from our Congressional delegation and our efforts to maintain this assistance will be continued.

The business session of our convention elected Ruth Shove as delegate to the NFB Convention in New York City and Sharon Haskins as first alternate. Sharon Haskins, a relative newcomer to Idaho, served effectively as our legislative chairman during the last year. Dick Jones will serve as our second alternate to the national Convention. Next year's convention will be held for the first time in northern Idaho.

As a final item of business, the organization donated fifty dollars to the Idaho-Oregon Lions Sight Conservation Foundation as a token of our appreciation for their cooperation in abandoning the use of the white cane in their fundraising activities.

If you think this report is one of an active convention, you are right. Our productivity would not have been as complete were it not for the participation of our national representative, Manuel Urena, throughout the convention. His presence, along with Kenneth Hopkins, Director of the Commission and board member in residence, resulted in the largest and best convention ever held in Idaho. Our banquet this year was truly the high

point of the convention. Manuel Urena's banquet address was most appropriate and proved to be entertaining and enlightening to conventioners; also present were Senator Frank Church; R. J. Bruning, representative of the Governor's Office; our State Auditor; State legislators; and the outgoing and incoming district governors of Lions International, district 39-W.

Recently Idaho established, as a statement of highest recognition for services performed to the blind of Idaho, the E. V. and Uldine Thelander Award. This award serves as a living memorial to the effectiveness of Uldine and Vic Thelander in improving the lives of the blind in our State both through organizational activity and through the establishment of the Commission for the Blind. This award is not given annually, but only upon those occasions when the activities of an individual are so noteworthy as to deserve our recognition. This year's award, including a pewter pitcher and engraved platter, was presented to Senator Frank Church. The award stated:

Presented to Senator Frank Church in recognition of and appreciation for his many years of support for the various programs set forth to enhance the lives of the blind throughout the Nation—support for our programs to provide economic stability through a more realistic welfare program and more adequate social security benefits both generally and specifically for the blind; support for rehabilitation training and employment opportunities through such legislation as the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act; and support for our efforts to gain

social and economic equality by recognizing and assisting in the establishment of our participation as a matter of right in programs affecting our lives.

This was also an election year. Ruth Shove was reelected president; Uldine Thelander and Dick Jones were elected first and second vice-presidents respectively. Helen Jones was elected secretary, and Denise LaDuke was elected treasurer.

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION HEAD DISMISSED

[Reprinted from the May 1973 issue of the *Palmetto Auroran*, publication of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind.]

After six and a half years of devoted and dedicated service to the South Carolina Commission for the Blind, or from its very inception, Dr. Fred L. Crawford, Executive Director of the Commission, on February 21, 1973, was fired by three of the five members of the Commission's board. Mrs. T. E. Barham, attending her first board meeting in February after being appointed by Governor West, aligned herself with Mr. Richard F. Neidhardt and Dr. Michael Holmes in firing Dr. Crawford without any prior notice to him. On the evening of the dismissal the following telegram was sent to Governor John C. West by Aurora State President Donald C. Capps:

MRS. T. E. BARHAM ATTENDED FIRST BOARD MEETING TODAY AND JOINED MR. R. F. NEIDHARDT IN FIRING DR. FRED L. CRAWFORD—WHAT A TRAGEDY—YOU NOW UNDERSTAND

MY APPREHENSION EXPRESSED TO YOU CONCERNING MRS. BARHAM'S LACK OF OBJECTIVITY. THUS MR. NEIDHARDT HAS COMPLETED HIS VENDETTA AND OBJECTIVE. DR. HOLMES RULED INELIGIBLE BY ATTORNEY GENERAL MORE THAN YEAR AGO. IN MY HUMBLE JUDGMENT HIS VOTE AGAINST DR. CRAWFORD IS NOT VALID AND SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO STAND. BLIND PEOPLE THROUGHOUT SOUTH CAROLINA ARE STUNNED AND BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED. FOR SEVEN YEARS DR. CRAWFORD SERVED HIS STATE AND THE BLIND WITH DISTINCTION AND DEDICATION. WE APPEALED TO YOU FOR HELP IN NOVEMBER AND NOW THAT A CRISIS EXISTS YOU ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED TO PERSONALLY INTERVENE TO RESTORE DR. CRAWFORD TO HIS RIGHTFUL POSITION. THE BLIND CITIZENS OF THIS STATE URGE YOU TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION. THANK YOU.

In both the November 1972 and February 1973 editions of the *Palmetto Auroran*, there were articles dealing with the unrest in the affairs of the Commission, especially as it related to the Commission's board. *Palmetto Auroran* readers will recall that it was pointed out things had not been the same with the Commission following the death of its first chairman, Dr. Samuel M. Lawton, in November of 1971. For the first five years of the Commission, under the chairmanship of Dr. Lawton, the Commission experienced harmonious growth and rendered outstanding service to the State's blind. Every board must have at least one person with unusually outstanding ability and stature and Dr. Lawton had those qualities. Even so, from

time to time there were exchanges and flare-ups between Mr. Neidhardt and Dr. Lawton as there were attacks made against the Executive Director by Mr. Neidhardt who did not support Dr. Crawford from the beginning. Neither Mr. Neidhardt nor Dr. Holmes voted for Dr. Crawford when he was hired in 1966, and Dr. Crawford was forced into a situation with a board divided three to two from the very inception of the Commission. For the first few months following the death of Dr. Lawton, in November of 1971, the Commission under its new chairman, Mr. Richard F. Neidhardt, continued to operate in a reasonably satisfactory manner. However, this situation was soon to change as there was increasing tension between Chairman Neidhardt and Dr. Crawford.

The August 1972 board meeting saw Mr. Neidhardt become very angry with Dr. Crawford; it was at that board meeting that Mr. Neidhardt had a copy of the bulletin of the Aurora State convention which displeased him very much because there was an announcement of the ground-breaking ceremony at the Association of the Blind during the Aurora convention. Mr. Neidhardt has not had any love for the Aurora Club for many years, or dating back to his service on the board of the Association of the Blind when he was its treasurer. At the August board meeting he clearly demonstrated his lack of love for Aurora by demanding that the ground-breaking ceremony not be held even though Dr. Crawford and the president of the Association had agreed upon this event and had authorized its announcement in the Aurora convention bulletin. Three board members attended the August 1972 meeting, with Mr. Neidhardt and Catherine Morrison voting not to have the ground-breaking ceremony

during the Aurora convention, and the third member, Mr. W. Eugene Abrams, voting to permit the ceremony. The other two board members, Miss Doris McKinney and Dr. Michael Holmes were not present for that board meeting. The cancellation of the ground-breaking ceremony by Mr. Neidhardt and Catherine Morrison was a source of real shock and embarrassment to the Aurora leadership, as the ground-breaking ceremony was wonderful news for the blind and the information had been sent out in convention-bulletin form to several hundred blind people throughout South Carolina. This cancellation was not appreciated by the blind as it was quite obvious there was no genuine concern or consideration for the feelings of the Aurora organization and its convention plans.

Following the August 1972 board meeting subsequent meetings resulted in further deterioration of relationships. Although the board of the Commission is a policy-setting body, Mr. Neidhardt began to inject himself into the day-to-day operation of the Commission, thereby directly interfering with the duties and functions of the Executive Director. There were contacts between Mr. Neidhardt and members of the staff, especially the rehabilitation supervisor, Mr. Bill Coleman. All of these activities served to greatly undermine Dr. Crawford and weaken his position, thereby affecting services to the blind. The Aurora State Board was aware of and extremely apprehensive over the deterioration of the affairs of the Commission. Aurora leaders knew that Mr. Neidhardt had opposed the creation of the Commission. Another board member had reported that Mr. Neidhardt declared that he had gotten on the Commission Board for the purpose of destroying and sabotaging the Commission. The blind also

remembered that Mr. Neidhardt, while serving on the board of the Association with the Reverend A. D. Croft and others, had voted to deny membership to many blind persons in the Association, and that it had been necessary to file litigation against Mr. Neidhardt and other board members which resulted in the court's ruling against him and granting membership to those blind persons denied membership.

Also, it was known by the blind that following the 1968 Association convention, Mr. Neidhardt, in a specially called meeting with the Lions at the Wade Hampton Hotel, attacked the Aurora organization. Mr. Neidhardt is among the Lions leadership and Mrs. Neidhardt is employed as executive director of the Lions Eyebank. It is a well-known fact that Aurora was primarily and principally responsible for the success of the passage of legislation creating the Commission for the Blind. Dr. Crawford is also an Auroran. In the interest of restoring stability to the Commission, a group of Aurorans and others met with Governor John C. West on Wednesday, November 29, and reviewed in detail the plight of the Commission and the misconduct of Mr. Neidhardt. Governor West assured our group that he was "sold on Dr. Crawford" and that if it could be shown Mr. Neidhardt was guilty of malfeasance in office he would suspend him. It was also suggested at the Governor's conference that a new chairman be elected since three members of the board were present for that conference. However, Catherine Morrison would not agree with the other two board members, Miss Doris McKinney and W. Eugene Abrams, to elect a new chairman, supporting instead the continued chairmanship of Mr. Neidhardt. Aurora leaders regarded this as a real setback since it was felt by our group and

apparently by the Governor as well, that the election of a new chairman would serve to stabilize the situation. The following week Mr. Neidhardt and his group met with the Governor and while we cannot be sure what transpired, it is probable that he attempted to discredit Dr. Crawford and the Aurora group.

There would seem to be no real evidence that these two meetings with the Governor served to improve the affairs of the Commission. However, a few weeks after these meetings Catherine Morrison, who had been ruled ineligible to serve on the Commission's board by the Attorney General because of a conflict of interest and also because her term had actually expired in May of 1972, was replaced on the Commission Board by Governor West's naming of Mrs. T. E. Barham to the board. While Mrs. Barham was formerly a member of the Aurora organization, having attended several State conventions and having addressed the convention, she withdrew some four years ago. It is understood Mrs. Barham worked on a part-time basis with the Commission in the Public Relations Department for a while, but that this employment did not end in a manner entirely satisfactory to her.

In a telephone conversation with Mrs. Barham slightly more than two years ago, she was invited to visit the newly expanded Aurora Center facility, but she declined stating that the blind needed a lot more than an enlarged Aurora Center. It was obvious that she did not share the pride that many other blind people had in the growth and development of the Aurora Center. Also in that telephone conversation, Mrs. Barham spoke harshly of the Commission, the Executive Director, and the Aurora organization, indicating

that the Aurora Club had created the Commission which was a monster and that there was poor administration of the Commission. Having knowledge of her position toward the Commission and the Executive Director, Aurora leaders realized that her appointment to the Commission's board would not favor Dr. Crawford or the Aurora organization. Mrs. Barham wasted little time in joining Mr. Neidhardt and Dr. Holmes in firing Dr. Crawford: She took this action at the very first board meeting she attended in February. As a matter of fact, Dr. Holmes, who was serving on the Commission Board illegally at the time since he was also a member of the Kingstree City Council, made the motion to fire Dr. Crawford and it was seconded by Mrs. Barham. It was not until several days later that Mrs. Barham on behalf of the board released what Aurora regards as a highly perfunctory and misleading statement to the news media concerning Dr. Crawford's discharge. The release made it appear that Dr. Crawford voluntarily resigned, whereas in fact he was fired. As a matter of fact, the paper would not print the release as submitted and did an article of its own. There were several articles in *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina), relating to this matter, and some of them are herewith reproduced.

PETITION HITS OFFICIALS:
CITES TWO ON BOARD FOR BLIND

[From *The State*, March 10, 1973]

A petition has been filed in court against two members of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind, charging one of them with dual officeholding and conflict of interest. The action, filed last week in

Richland County Court, comes in the wake of the controversial resignation of Dr. Fred L. Crawford as Executive Director of the Commission. The court petition was filed by two commissioners, Doris McKinney, of Greenwood, and W. Eugene Abrams, of Anderson, and James Sims, of Columbia, blind operator of a vending stand supervised by the Commission, against Richard F. Neidhardt, Chairman of the Commission, and Dr. Michael Holmes, of Kingstree, another member of the agency.

Petition Charges

The petition charges Dr. Holmes with dual officeholding because he is also on the Kingstree City Council. The State constitution prohibits persons from holding two offices "of honor or profit" at the same time. The petition also alleges Dr. Holmes, an ophthalmologist, provided services to blind aid recipients while a member of the Commission and later billed and collected from the Commission for such services.

Determination Asked

The plaintiffs asked the court to make a determination "on the propriety and validity of the member of the Commission for the Blind contracting with the Commission to perform services for them for which such commissioner shall be compensated." Chairman Neidhardt, who is in the insurance business, was named as a defendant "to assure that all issues are fully and completely resolved."

Resigned Last Month

Dr. Crawford resigned last month reportedly under pressure from a majority of the Commission. His resignation was

accepted by a 3-2 vote. Those reportedly voting in the majority were Neidhardt, Dr. Holmes, and Mrs. T. E. Barham, of Columbia, the Commission's newest member. The Commission has scheduled a hearing Wednesday to consider whatever grievance Dr. Crawford might care to make.

Differences Cited

Crawford was hired by a split vote as Executive Director in 1966. Since that time, there have been numerous differences between Crawford and members of the Commission. Dr. Holmes' term is due to expire in May. Any vacancy would be filled by Governor John C. West.

Inquiries Received

Dwight Drake, legal aide to the Governor, said the Governor's Office has received inquiries "pro and con relative to the resignation (of Dr. Crawford) and the surrounding controversy." Drake said the Governor's Office is inquiring into the controversy. Asked if he planned to resign prior to May, Dr. Holmes said: "No . . . I'm not the type to run from anything. My understanding now is to go through May." Dr. Holmes said he had discussed the matter with the State Attorney General's Office "and they didn't seem too concerned." The eye doctor said he has been a member of the Kingstree City Council for four years "and no one has complained before . . . They didn't make it an issue until they got mad at me." Dr. Holmes conceded he has treated patients eligible for services paid for by the Commission. Asked what percentage of his practice was composed of Commission patients, Dr. Holmes replied: "It's small . . . offhand I'd say between five and ten percent." Dr. Holmes said he thought it

was essential to have an eye specialist—a medical doctor, not an optometrist—sit on the Commission. He expressed doubt one could be found who doesn't treat Commission patients and would be willing to serve. He estimated that there are between forty-five and fifty ophthalmologists in the State. Dr. Holmes said his service on the Commission and treatment of Commission patients could be best described "as a misconflict of interest." "It's cost me more in time and trouble to come to Columbia for Commission meetings," he said.

COMMISSION FOR BLIND MEMBER RESIGNS POST

[From *The State*, March 27, 1973]

Dr. Michael Holmes, of Kingstree, faced with a suit charging him with dual officeholding, has resigned from the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Holmes, who has served on the Commission for six years, is also a member of the Kingstree City Council. Holmes was charged in a suit by two fellow Commission members with dual officeholding and with treating patients whose care was paid for by the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Holmes said earlier that he would not resign unless asked to by the Governor or the State Attorney General. A spokesman for Governor John C. West said Monday that he was not aware of Holmes being asked to resign. West is in New York and unavailable for comment. When asked if he advised the ophthalmologist to resign, Attorney General Daniel R. McLeod said, "I'll have to leave it at this—he did resign." Holmes gave "no comment" when contacted Monday. The split between

members of the Commission for the Blind surfaced when the board by a three-to-two vote asked Dr. Fred L. Crawford, Executive Director of the Commission, to resign last month. Crawford, Director of the Commission since it was formed in 1966, resigned under protest. He is now appealing the resignation through the State employee's grievance procedure. The two minority voters on the Crawford resignation—Doris McKinney, of Greenwood, and W. Eugene Abrams, of Anderson—entered the suit against Holmes.

Holmes claimed earlier that less than one percent of his gross income comes from treating patients whose care is paid for by the Commission. He said the time he spent away from his office on Commission business cost him more than he made for treating Commission patients.

THE STATE HOUSE: DUAL OFFICEHOLDING

[From *The State*, March 29, 1973]

Dr. Michael Holmes, of Kingtree, was advised by the South Carolina Attorney General that his serving on the State Commission for the Blind and the Kingtree City Council was dual officeholding. Holmes, who resigned from the Commission last week, has refused to comment on the matter and a spokesman for the Governor's Office said earlier that he thought that Holmes was not asked to resign. But Holmes' letter of resignation states: "I have been advised by the Attorney General and my personal attorney that my being a member of the Commission for the Blind and also holding the position of city councilman of

Kingtree constitutes dual officeholding, as defined by the State constitution." Holmes was charged in a suit by two fellow Commission members with dual officeholding. The suit arose after Holmes voted with a three-two majority to ask for the resignation of the Commission's Executive Director, Dr. Fred L. Crawford. The two members in the minority—Doris McKinney, of Greenwood, and W. Eugene Abrams, of Anderson—then sued Holmes. Holmes' resignation leaves an even two-versus-two split on the Commission concerning Crawford's resignation. The new appointee, whoever he may be, will probably cast the deciding vote in a grievance appeal that Crawford is making to the Commission. A source within the Governor's office said the search is on for an appointee who is neutral on the controversy.

HOLMES' STATEMENT

[From *The State*, March 30, 1973]

Dr. Michael Holmes, of Kingtree, who resigned from the South Carolina Commission for the Blind last week after being charged with dual officeholding, issued a statement Thursday in which he said "I have not knowingly been guilty of any impropriety." Holmes said that his appointment to the Commission was without pay and that he served at a great personal sacrifice. "In 1969 I was elected to the Town Council of Kingtree, which is also a position without pay. I did not at the time consider the question of dual officeholding, and it was never called to my attention," he said.

He said that after a majority of the

Commission asked for the resignation of its Executive Director, Dr. Fred L. Crawford, last month, the minority charged in a suit that he should be removed from the Commission for dual officeholding and for treating blind patients. Holmes said he was prepared to defend himself on charges of treating patients whose care was paid for by the Commission for the Blind "because I only treated patients in the area that was referred to me as an ophthalmologist at a cost less than paid by individual patients. I also treated many blind patients without cost." He said his resignation was made on the basis of recommendations from the State Attorney General and his personal attorney. In a letter accepting his resignation, Governor John C. West expressed his appreciation for Holmes' service and added: "I recognized that being a new State agency, problems arose which may have been difficult as well as exasperating, but I appreciate your high sense of duty and ethics displayed throughout." Holmes refused to comment on his resignation when approached by the press earlier this week.

At the eleventh hour, or just a few days before the Court hearing was to be held on Monday, March 26, Dr. Holmes submitted his resignation. It would appear unfortunate that litigation had to be filed in order to see that the law was carried out properly.

In April, Governor West appointed Mr. Harry J. Haynsworth, III, associate professor of law at the University of South Carolina, to the Commission's board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. Holmes. It will be noted that this was Governor West's third appointee since the

death of Dr. Lawton eighteen months ago. In order they are: W. Eugene Abrams, Mrs. T. E. Barham, and Mr. Harry J. Haynsworth, III.

The board of directors of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind, Inc., in the form of a resolution, petitioned Governor John C. West to remove Mr. Richard F. Neidhardt from the board of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. The resolution was presented to the Governor on Wednesday, May 2. In addition the resolution was placed on the desks of all members of the senate and house of representatives. This important action also received very widespread coverage in the news media, with at least one wire service, the Associated Press, featuring an article on the petition. "The Seven O'Clock Report," watched by thousands of South Carolinians on WIS-TV, featured the petition as the lead story on its May 2 telecast. *The State*, South Carolina's largest newspaper, carried the story in the May 3 issue. The resolution, which is entirely self-explanatory, reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, eleemosynary corporation organized, created, and existing under the law of the State of South Carolina for the purposes of promoting the general welfare of the thousands of blind men, women, and children in the State; including promoting opportunities for them, enriching their lives socially and economically, and vocationally rehabilitating them from the effects of their sightless lives, all under law and in accordance with it; and,

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Aurora

Club of the Blind is interested in the problems and difficulties of the blind and is uniquely qualified to evaluate the effects of living without sight, because it is the only organization in the State of South Carolina whose membership consists of the legally blind; and,

WHEREAS, since the time of its organization, the Aurora Club of the Blind has consistently opposed the antiquated, paternalistic welfare views held by many, and has consistently supported rehabilitation efforts rather than welfare efforts, and has supported the policy of taking the blind off the welfare rolls and placing them on the tax-paying rolls; and,

WHEREAS, in order to further promote this view and the best interest of all the citizens of South Carolina, the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind sponsored and supported the creation of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind as a State agency in 1966 to promote programs and services for the blind and has since its creation been intensely interested in the South Carolina Commission for the Blind; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Fred L. Crawford, a blind native of South Carolina, and one of the most eminently qualified men in the United States to lead the State Commission for the Blind as its Executive Director, was inappropriately discharged primarily through the urging of Richard F. Neidhardt, and should be forthwith reinstated; and,

WHEREAS, Richard F. Neidhardt, a member of the Commission:

(1) opposed creation of the Commission

and has thereafter opposed its continuance and has stated it should be dissolved;

(2) has discriminated against the blind in many ways, requiring that they resort to the courts for the enforcement of their constitutionally created rights;

(3) as Chairman of the Commission ordered payment of thousands of dollars to another member of the Commission against the advice and counsel of the Attorney General of South Carolina;

(4) has continually promoted policies which degrade human dignity and particularly offend the blind;

(5) has arbitrarily and unreasonably caused the programs and services to the blind to deteriorate and lose effectiveness; and,

WHEREAS, all of the organizations of the blind in South Carolina have sought the resignation of Richard F. Neidhardt without success; and,

WHEREAS, His Excellency, the Honorable John C. West, Governor of the State of South Carolina, has the power and authority to request the resignation of Richard F. Neidhardt and, should he not thereafter resign, suspend him from office pending a full public investigation and such hearings as might be appropriate on the matters herein referred to; and,

WHEREAS, the officers, directors, and members of the South Carolina Aurora Club for the Blind are determined to take such appropriate action as is necessary to

continue the wholesome, healthful, rehabilitative programs instituted and directed by the Commission under the direction of Dr. Fred L. Crawford before his discharge: Now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the board of directors of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind in meeting duly assembled in the city of Columbia on this the 29th day of April, 1973, that this organization respectfully petitions His Excellency, the Honorable John C. West, Governor of South Carolina, for the following action:

- (1) That Richard F. Neidhardt forthwith be asked to resign from membership on the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and, should he fail to do so, that he forthwith be suspended from office pending a full investigation into the matters and things herein contained;
- (2) That he take appropriate action to insure the reinstatement forthwith of Dr. Fred L. Crawford to the position from which he was improperly discharged;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to the President of the senate and the Speaker of the house with a copy to all members of the General Assembly with the request for legislation, should it be necessary, to correct the ills and abuses referred to herein;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the president and officers of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind are in their discretion empowered to:

- (1) employ counsel, if necessary, to assist in instituting legal action to protect the rights of all blind South Carolinians, and to assist in the preparation of such remedial legislation as might be necessary to correct the wrongs referred to herein;
- (2) to take such other measures as will properly protect the best interest of the thousands of blind men, women, and children who are citizens of the State of South Carolina.

* * * * *

LOUISIANA CONVENTION

by
Harvey Webb

On April 28, the first annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana was held at the Capitol House Hotel, in Baton Rouge.

This was a one-day affair, but it was a well-filled and productive day.

Jim Omvig, from Des Moines, was our luncheon speaker, and did an excellent job as always.

Louis Michot, Superintendent of Education for the State of Louisiana was a speaker, and told of plans for improving educational facilities in the State for all children, but especially for the blind and physically handicapped. Mr. Michot has appointed a ten-member advisory committee to study programs for the blind in the education department, and seven of the ten members of this committee are hand-picked NFB members. We are expecting great things from his

administration.

A report was given on library services for the blind by Mrs. Blanca J. Lastrapes, and although Judy, as she is known to her friends, thought the future looked good for the library, she said we were faced with budget cuts on the State level. Our organization immediately went to work on this matter, and whether we were instrumental in remedying the situation is hard to say, but it has been alleviated somewhat at this writing.

A representative of the Social Security Administration spoke to the convention, bringing us up to date on matters pertaining to the blind.

Election of officers and two board members was held, and Harvey Webb was unanimously reelected as president. The remainder of the slate is as follows: Eddie Figueron, first vice-president; Julio Castro, second vice-president; Mrs. Negatha Jones, secretary; Mrs. Elnora Dyer, treasurer. The Reverend William Chissom was reelected to the board, along with John Lemaire.

The members assembled for the convention voted unanimously for us to contact the Louisiana congressional delegation and urge their support of H.R. 6554. This has been done, and to date all responses have been favorable. We had approximately one hundred and thirty registered for the convention. In the words of Bobby Gentry, in one of her songs, "We ain't done bad."

"SING IT AGAIN, SAM" OR "WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN?"— EARLY VERSION

[Editor's Note.—NAC was preceded by COMSTAC—the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind—organized, staffed, and programmed by the American Foundation for the Blind. The manner in which they deal with those who had and/or have the temerity to question motives and methods is familiar: "The blind are to be served [whether they will or no] and the blind will take what we offer because we know what is good for them. And we know what is good for them because we are the professionals. And the organized blind are most ungrateful and do not appreciate our efforts on their behalf." The tone and the language were the same when the NFB objected to the activities of COMSTAC as they are with NAC as can be seen in the correspondence set out below. When will they ever learn?]

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Berkeley, California, August 27, 1965.

Mr. HUESTEN COLLINGWOOD,
*Conference Manager, Commission on
Standards and Accreditation
of Services for the Blind,
New York, New York.*

DEAR MR. COLLINGWOOD: In the closing sentence of your letter of August 24 you indicate that the goal of the New York meeting "is limited" to assisting the Commission in developing standards. In the preceding sentence you say that you anticipate further meetings—these, however, to be limited to policies and methods of implementing an accreditation system.

These two are, of course, closely interrelated. Whether you can establish an accreditation system will depend in large part on whether you can gain general acceptance by those who work in the field of the standards upon which accreditation will depend. Whether you can formulate generally acceptable standards, in turn, will again depend in part upon the character of the standards, but in part also on the degree to which those standards are an expression of the leadership and constructive thought in the field.

I hope you will pardon my candor in saying that the method of organizing the New York conference is not well calculated to gaining the adherence of that leadership and the development of that thought. Indeed, on the face of it, the plan seems more geared to gaining and retaining control than to stimulating intellectual processes and productive participation.

Three policies seem to be of utmost importance in their bearing on the success of your conference and of your long-range enterprise: a policy of free-flowing participation on the part of qualified experts in the development of the standards eventually intended to be the basis of the accreditation system; a policy permitting something of an overall evaluation of tentative standards—say, at their current stage of preparation; and a policy by which the Commissioners might take full advantage of their numerous expert consultants by direct interchange of ideas with them rather than a distillation through intermediaries. There is something more to the intellectual and creative process than manufacturing standardized articles to be put upon a transmission belt for eventual consideration, acceptance, or rejection by an Olympian consumer who

can settle all questions by a simple matter of taste.

The plan for the New York meeting as outlined in your letter seems a close duplicate of that followed at the AAWB meeting in Denver. You cannot be unaware of the fact that at Denver there was widespread latent and articulated hostility to many of the standards proposed, and even deeper resentment toward the method of presentation that was employed. It would be unfortunate now to repeat and to compound the mistakes of Denver. I am taking the trouble to write you this letter and to make these points because I believe that constructive and worthwhile work on raising standards in the field can be of the utmost importance in improving the lot and the futures of blind people in this country. If these standards are well formulated and move in the right direction, their influence can be boundless and beneficial. If they are poorly formulated and move in the wrong direction, their influence can be equally boundless and detrimental.

Chopping the field up into little pieces for separate, detailed, and specific standard-making and evaluation may be one part of a proper process, but it is surely only one part. Another and an equally important part is to take an overall look at a proposed set of standards, to review them for their common trends and tendencies, to examine pervasive presuppositions and articulated and unarticulated major premises.

Should not your New York conference be reorganized so as to permit such an overall review as well as a detailed and specific one; so as to encourage free-flowing discussion, interchange, and

thought among the assembled experts; and so as to involve the Commissioners deeply in this very process rather than seeking "to assist" them in the way you indicated in your letter.

Yours sincerely,

JACOBUS tenBROEK.

[COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND
ACCREDITATION OF SERVICES
FOR THE BLIND.]

Lewisburg, Penna., January 16, 1966.

Dr. JACOBUS tenBROEK,
*National Federation of the Blind,
Berkeley, California.*

DEAR DR. tenBROEK: Because of absence from Lewisburg I did not have an opportunity until yesterday to read the December issue of *The Braille Monitor* in which you write about the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind. Thank you for the opportunity you have given for me to read the article and for your letter of December 31, 1965, also relayed to me by Mr. Handel. I regret the delay in writing to you.

Your opinions and comments about the work of the Commission and its committees, the national conference which you attended, or any other phase of the Commission's activity will always be welcome. Indeed, from the outset we have sought widespread opinion and experience, though, as you know, these are so vast and so varied that it is not possible to have all persons share with us. But all will have an opportunity to profit from the studies and recommendations of the Commission if they wish. Your own articles could be an influence to that end. We know that you,

like the Commission, your own Federation, and the organizations you mention in the December article have a common goal, the improvement of services for the blind.

Perhaps you will wish to provide space in *The Monitor* for a reply to the articles in some specific way at the conclusion of the series. Or, you might regard it as more objective to submit each article in advance, and include comments from the Commission's point of view immediately following.

In any event we want you to know that we appreciate your willingness to write about the Commission's work, even if you dissent in many ways from the judgments and recommendations of the Commission. Present judgments of the Commission have been reached only after long and thorough study and naturally with some differences. Such differences have never caused us to depart from the main goals, nor to dull our discussion of them, and the ways to reach them.

Sincerely yours,

ARTHUR L. BRANDON,
Chairman.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Berkeley, California, January 20, 1966.

Mr. ARTHUR L. BRANDON,
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

DEAR MR. BRANDON: Your letter of January 16 has just arrived and I am writing you immediately.

The January issue of *The Braille Monitor*

containing articles on COMSTAC is now published and is in the mails on the way to you. The February issue containing three additional articles on COMSTAC is this week being sent to the printer. The March issue, which will carry further stories on COMSTAC, will go to press about February 20.

I am herewith enclosing advance copies of the February issue articles. In a few days I shall try to sort out some of the March issue materials and send you the probable COMSTAC stories.

We shall be happy to carry in the March issue replies to or commentaries upon the February stories if you wish to prepare them or have them prepared. At the same time we would be glad, indeed, to publish your commentaries upon the March stories along with the March stories. As far as it can be worked out I shall send you advance copies of stories to appear in other issues and provide you with an opportunity to make a reply in the same issue.

Whether you wish to send us material on this basis or not, I shall be most happy to provide space at the end of the series—should that end come—in which you may address yourself to the problems discussed or to the articles issued, or to the future plans and prospects of COMSTAC.

I hope you will not regard it as inappropriate or ungracious of me to comment on a couple of arguments made directly or indirectly in your most polite and tolerant letter. The “opinion and experience” you have sought may have been geographically “widespread” but otherwise has been within a narrow range. Indeed, except for a slight bow to the organized blind themselves which has been

in the nature of tokenism, the opinion and experience has been almost entirely that of professionals or nonprofessionals engaged in the general field of charitable work, but particularly that dealing with the blind. There has been a noticeable absence of any deliberate effort to dig out the “opinion and experience” of those people who might have a “widely” different approach, attitude, and background even to the point of questioning the fundamental bases of the COMSTAC enterprise as to direction, goal, and personnel.

That differences have never caused you “to depart from [your] main goals” should only be treated as a virtue if the differences are of the sort which you should properly disregard. In this case the differences are fundamental. Many of us believe that the standards as currently proposed will be cataclysmic. In that case, the leader who truly wishes to improve services for the blind will not only be caused to depart from the present method of reaching his goals, but will reverse course and labor in another direction.

May I finally say with respect that it would indeed be most ironic if after it is apparently too late to make any difference, we should at long last engage in a significant dialogue on central issues in the pages of *The Braille Monitor*. Ironic or not as to the timing, such a dialogue nevertheless might very well be of the highest importance.

Yours sincerely,

JACOBUS tenBROEK.

Lewisburg, Penna., February 9, 1966.

Dr. JACOBUS tenBROEK,
*National Federation of the Blind,
Berkeley, California.*

DEAR DR. tenBROEK: Thank you for your letter of January 20, and for the copies of articles scheduled to appear in *The Braille Monitor* in regard to the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind.

Naturally I am surprised that you find so much to criticize adversely and so little to comment about favorably in view of the judgments reached and expressed by a host of other persons. Nevertheless, you have a right and a responsibility for expressing your opinions. I know that we cannot all agree on many matters, especially on proper standards, but I know we are in agreement on the main purpose: improvement of services for blind persons.

I appreciate your offer to provide space for me or one of my COMSTAC colleagues to reply to the *Monitor* articles. With your permission I shall delay a decision. Since other publications are planning articles which at this stage appear to be very favorable to the work of the Commission and its committees it might be just as well not to take up further space in *The Monitor*. Repetition or duplication would avail little.

Please permit me one additional comment. Last fall I invited you to present in writing your own point of view or comments in order that these might be before the Commission. This would have been an opportunity for you to have helped the Commission's committees reach conclusions more sympathetic to your own

perhaps than is now the case through a series of articles that deal most of the time on negative factors, after the committees' work is done. We expect some negative reactions; there is and has been in the Commission and the committees. It will be our hope and expectation that your own negative comments will lead to further study and improvements in standards. If these and other articles in *The Monitor* and other publications lead to further discussion much can be gained.

Sincerely yours,

ARTHUR L. BRANDON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Berkeley, California, February 14, 1966.

Mr. ARTHUR L. BRANDON,
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

DEAR MR. BRANDON: I am, of course, perfectly agreeable to a delay in your decision whether to answer our *Braille Monitor* articles in *The Braille Monitor*. I would like to express again, however, my hope that you will do so. Your comment that articles favorable to COMSTAC will appear in other periodicals, of course, doesn't meet this issue. It is easy to congregate with those who agree with us; it's far more important, however, to meet with those who disagree—to understand their arguments and their point of view if not to answer them.

Your letter, I'm afraid, conveys the impression that you do not fully appreciate the cleavage between the blind and the professionals, so-called, who have drawn up the COMSTAC standards. This is not a

mere trivial difference about the formulation or desirability of this standard or that standard. Our position is far more fundamental. Indeed, for a parallel you should look to the Negroes and their civil rights revolution. They will no longer be satisfied to have the whites exclude them and prepare standards of conduct for them. So with us. Our right to participate in the preparation of plans for our own lives and our own futures—or, if you will, in the formulation of standards for our institutions and services—cannot any longer be casually spurned as if it were an argument about the formulation of a standard or the punctuation of a sentence. That right is not in any sense complied with by a form request to any of us to submit our views, which the professionals then may or may not pay attention to in their work on our lives.

Should we set aside for a moment the methods by which these standards have been prepared, our criticism is still of a very fundamental nature—namely that the standards are misconceived and misdirected; that overall they will not improve our institutions and services but on the contrary will make them worse; that they are not geared to the overall objective of the social integration and independence of the blind but toward their custodialism and nonparticipation.

Were I in your position I would pause more than twice to consider whether I should like my name associated with this development carrying such a portent of human disaster. I appeal to you again to pause and consider whether at this eleventh hour something drastic cannot be done to

reshape these standards and recast the whole conception.

Yours sincerely,

JACOBUS tenBROEK.

Lewisburg, Penna., February 18, 1966.

DEAR DR. tenBROEK: Thank you for your letter of February 14.

I am pleased that you are agreeable to a delay in the decision whether to have an article submitted by me to *The Braille Monitor* by way of a reply to the present series on the preliminary reports of the Commission on Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind.

Literally hundreds of blind persons were consulted, some are on the Commission, others on the committees; and the staff includes blind persons. Many blind persons not professionals, as you call them, have helped in many ways. And their counsel has been valuable indeed.

This still allows for differences of opinion. If the Commission tried to resolve all these there would be no report, and improved services for the blind could be further delayed.

Nevertheless, I shall make your letters available to members of the Commission at the next meeting.

Sincerely yours,

ARTHUR L. BRANDON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Berkeley, California, February 24, 1966.

Mr. ARTHUR L. BRANDON,
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

DEAR MR. BRANDON: H e r e w i t h enclosed please find copies of five articles which will appear in the March issue of *The Braille Monitor*. At any time you wish to submit a commentary for publication in *The Monitor* we will be happy to provide the space.

It is obvious from your letter of February 18 that we do not yet have a meeting of the minds even as to the areas of our difference and the character of the controversy about the COMSTAC standards.

When you say that "Literally hundreds of blind persons were consulted" you can only be using the word "consulted" in a very loose sense. Certainly the blind persons on the Commission, in some agency staffs, and actually represented on the committees played no more than a passive role nor had an opportunity to do so. Your figure of "hundreds" could only be taken literally if you encompass some of the large meetings at which the standards were somehow discussed. Presumably these would include the Denver Convention of the AAWB. I attended that convention and would regard the term "consulted" as utterly inapplicable to anything that went on there. Drafts of the standards had not been made available in advance; they were not made available at the time; those discussing them continually professed inability to say what they were or to provide justifications for them. My estimate would be that from ninety percent

to ninety-five percent of the blind persons who attended those sessions volubly manifested opposition to what was being proposed—presented in a vague and insubstantial form—and it is perfectly clear that their feelings have not been reflected in the COMSTAC standards.

Basically the active blind people who support the standards are those in assorted programs and agencies for the blind and those who aspire to be in such programs. Moreover, the vast majority employed in such programs or aspiring to be in them are opposed to the standards, though many of them do not feel free openly to express that opposition.

Even more important than all of this, however, is the fact that the organized blind in their organized form were systematically and deliberately excluded from participation in this work at stages and in ways which would have made it possible for them to influence the character of the product. That this has been done will hardly be challenged. That it was deliberately done I can testify from my own knowledge since I was repeatedly told by the staff of the Commission that only professionals were to be consulted.

When you say again in your letter of February 18 that the work of the Commission could not be held up to secure agreement because if that had been done "there would be no report and improved services for the blind could be further delayed," this assumes the very point at issue. Will the COMSTAC standards result in "improved services for the blind?" We are convinced that they will not and that, indeed, they contain the most ominous portent for the future of the blind people of this country. Nothing would surely be

done if one had to wait for complete agreement, but when disagreement prevails, one should at least seek the right course and not the wrong one.

Cordially yours,

JACOBUS tenBROEK.

FLORIDA CONVENTION

by

Gertrude Sitt

The third annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida was held in Miami the weekend of May 11-13, 1973. According to all reports, this was the most successful convention held so far in our short history. There were a number of extremely interesting exhibits.

The convention got off to a fine start on Friday evening, with a reception and cocktail party in the Orange Bowl Room at the Columbus Hotel in Miami. During this time we were entertained for an hour by the Robert Duff Chorale, a sighted choral group of which Mrs. Sitt is a member.

On Saturday morning the State president, Elizabeth Bowen, opened the convention. The invocation was delivered by Charles Neal, pastor of the Unity Center of Practical Christianity in Miami. Mayor Maurice Ferre of Miami welcomed the convention to the city of Miami, after which the business of the convention got under way.

Prior to the beginning of the afternoon program, we had a demonstration of the Amana Radar Range Microwave Oven, which is equipped with Braille markings on the controls, instructions in Braille, and a Braille cookbook. This appliance was

donated to the State organization by Major Appliances Company, of Miami, to be used as the first prize in a statewide raffle we conducted just prior to the convention.

"How effective can government be in protecting the civil rights of the physically handicapped?" was a topic ably discussed by Congressman William Lehman and State Representative Elaine Gordon. A long telegram from United States Senator Lawton Chiles was read to the convention, expressing the views of the Senator, who could not be with us because of a previous commitment. The views expressed were all very favorable, and we feel that we have made friends of these people, and that they understand our philosophy and will work with and for us.

Following this, Paul Obester of Telesensory Systems, Inc., of Palo Alto, California, gave an explanation of the Optacon, a reading device for blind people. We had excellent newspaper, radio, and television coverage both prior to and during the convention, aided, of course, by the Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Murdock Martin, Chief of the Florida Bureau of Blind Services, talked to us about the role of the State agency for the blind under the new Federal welfare program. Mr. Martin was followed by Louis Flum, Social Security representative of Hollywood, Florida, who explained social security provisions for the blind under current regulations. Donald Wedewer, head of the Miami office of the Bureau of Blind Services, presented his views on employment opportunities for the blind in government and in the private sector of the economy.

The banquet featured Donald C. Capps,

First Vice-President of the NFB, as speaker of the evening. Father Bennett of the Holy Family Church of Miami gave the invocation, and the toastmaster was Harry Russell, coordinator of employment of the physically handicapped for Dade County. Sunday morning's session began with a demonstration of a very unusual sewing machine, called the Viking, which featured many innovations which are of great help to blind and physically handicapped persons. The invocation was given by Rabbi Milton Schlinsky, Temple Adath Yeshurun of North Miami Beach.

Following the election of two new members to the board of directors, the site of the 1974 convention was given as St. Petersburg, Florida; and the convention is to be held the third week in May. With this announcement, President Bowen closed the 1973 convention.

Because of the excellent cooperation of many Miami merchants, some of our conventioners went away with some very nice prizes. There were forty people registered, and thirty-eight attended the banquet.

* * * * *

HEW SAVES ON MAILING; BLIND HURT

by
Charles Bartlett

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) *Inquirer*.]

Of all the economies being imposed in the name of fiscal restraint, none seems more miserly than a recent decision which is going to work against the interests of the blind, totally disabled, and elderly poor.

Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Caspar Weinberger has directed the Social Security Agency to forego the expense of a thorough search by mail for those persons who may unknowingly become eligible for Federal assistance when the Government, under the new welfare reform law, takes over from the States the responsibility for paying monthly allowances to the blind, disabled, and elderly poor.

For those 3.3 million people now on State rolls, the transfer will be automatic next January 1. The Social Security Agency, in response to the new law, will gather up the payment lists of some 1152 State and local welfare agencies, check the eligibility of those listed for payments and carry on the subsidy at the new Federal level of \$130 per month.

But officials estimate that as many as three million additional persons will be eligible for the Federal payments. At least half the States have been paying less than \$130 a month and many apply restrictions which discourage eligible people from filing for subsidies.

Since the average payment under the old system has been around seventy-five dollars, with many Southern States clinging close to fifty dollars, the new support level is obviously going to attract a great many who were not interested before. It is going to seem particularly attractive to a lot of people who have been trying to get by with a thin slice of social security. The Social Security Agency had intended to reach out to these people with a mailing to some nine million names drawn from its rolls.

The plan was an emulation of the Operation Medicare Alert with which the

Social Security Agency notified old people of their new rights after that legislation was enacted. But this time Weinberger vetoed the mailing because of the cost that would be involved in postage and in the time spent by employees responding to queries which the mailing would generate. It was also apparent that the mailing would enlarge the projected cost of the program.

This has the ring of a strange, callous economy. The Social Security Agency can still issue press releases and pamphlets and work with local organizations to notify old people of their rights. But poor old people, living in a world outside the mainstream, can be hard to reach.

Weinberger's predecessor, Elliot Richardson, was fond of making the point that, if the social benefits now on the Federal books were extended equitably to all who could legitimately claim them, the added costs would double the present Federal budget. He offered this as a good reason for pruning back a mass of programs that were providing an uneven response to the needs.

But now Weinberger, who does not have the reputation of a hardhearted man, is launching a new law, a Nixon reform, and it is to the Administration's interest to have it applied in the most equitable way. These are people, after all, whom Weinberger has described as the legitimate targets of welfare, and scrimping on them will not do much for the record of compassion which the President wants to keep from being lost in the budget cuts.

RECENT AMENDMENTS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL SECURITY

by

Robert M. Ball

[Editor's Note.—The following is a summary of a speech given recently by former United States Commissioner of Social Security Robert M. Ball.]

Mr. Ball discussed the effects of recent amendments and possible future developments in social security. He said that although there would always be a need for improvements in social security the cash benefit part has reached a new maturity and stability; that he would not expect in the future the kind of continuous changes we have had in the past. He cited as characteristic of the cash benefit program today practically universal coverage; benefit amounts at a respectable level for those coming on the rolls in the future compared with past earnings; "inflation proof"; adequate financing into the next century.

He emphasized the effectiveness of the program by giving a few figures: one out of eight Americans receiving a monthly social security check; over ninety percent of all the older people in the country either getting benefits or eligible for them if they retire; ninety-five out of one hundred women and children in the country protected by social security, so that in the event of the death of the breadwinner they would get monthly benefits.

Mr. Ball reviewed the improvements made in recent years and went into some detail on changes in the retirement test. He stressed the importance of the concept of social security benefits as insurance against

the loss of earnings because of the occurrence of certain specified risks—a concept very different from an annuity payable to everyone at sixty-five, which would cost a great deal more.

In explaining the recent change in the “retirement test” he said that under the old law, at certain levels of earnings, it was actually possible to have less total income because of earnings; and, of course, that was a bad feature. That has now been changed, and under the new law the more a person works and the more he earns the more he will have in total income. The first \$2100 in a year is exempt completely, and above that the beneficiary never loses more than one dollar in benefits for each two dollars that are earned.

On the Medicare program Mr. Ball said the biggest change was the extension of Medicare to people who have been receiving social security disability benefits for two years or longer. This is the first time Medicare protection has been given to anyone below age sixty-five. He said that there were some sixty other changes to Medicare, ranging all the way from Medicare benefits to people with chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis or transplant, to highly technical modifications; and that taken all together these changes improve the program a great deal. He mentioned especially clarification of the conditions under which Medicare will pay for care in a skilled nursing home. In the future Mr. Ball saw the possibility of some kind of health insurance for people of all ages.

In describing the new program of supplemental security income, Mr. Ball explained that for the first time it establishes the responsibility of the Federal

Government on a uniform basis across the country for a minimum income and that it is fully paid for out of general revenues, not out of social security contributions. He pointed out that the new program will supplement social security benefits for those whose incomes are inadequate, and expressed the conviction that some time in the future the level of payments will be raised to at least the poverty standard.

He also pointed out that many more people will be eligible under the new law than under the present public assistance programs. The Federal law does not have property liens or relative-responsibility provisions; the Federal standard of need is higher than those of some States, and some people who have been reluctant to apply under the welfare system will now apply because Social Security will administer the program.

Mr. Ball emphasized the importance of the idea of social insurance—tracing from its beginning in the medieval guilds down through centuries of experimentation to the present. He expressed uneasiness over a small number of people who propose a complete change in the way social security is financed, and pointed out that although the low-paid worker does pay social security contributions, he also gets benefits that are weighted in his favor and gets considerably more in return for his contributions than the more highly paid worker does. He said that if the contributions were separated from the benefits and the benefits paid out of general revenues, this would probably lead to sweeping changes and gradually modify social security into a welfare system.

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NEBRASKA CONVENTION

by
Verda Auen

The National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska convened on June 2, 1973, at the Paxton Hotel in Omaha, with the Grand Island and Lincoln Chapters serving as cohosts. On Friday night, in order to give everything a good sendoff, they provided refreshments and gracious hospitality. The nominating committee, with Dick Gulizia as chairman, and comprised of chapter presidents from Grand Island, Lincoln, North Platte, and Omaha, met on Friday evening, after which President Parker called a short meeting of the board of directors.

The general session was called to order by the president at ten o'clock on Saturday morning. President Parker extended the welcome. Treasurer Dick Gulizia gave his report, which was adopted. Secretary Verda Auen read the minutes from the 1972 convention submitted by the past secretary and then read a report of business transacted at three executive board meetings held during the year. The report was accepted for filing.

Three members-at-large were accepted. Distinguished guests who were introduced were: Second Vice-President of the National Federation of the Blind Jim Couts, from Independence, Missouri; Perry Sundquist, Editor of *The Braille Monitor*, from Sacramento, California; Iowa State President Sylvester Nemmers and Mrs. Nemmers, from Des Moines, Iowa. Later in the day we were honored by the appearance of the Honorable Edward Zorinsky, Mayor of Omaha. Senator Duke Snyder and Mrs. Snyder were evening guests.

Perry Sundquist discussed national legislation during which he reviewed how H.R. 1, the 1972 Amendments to the Social Security Act, would affect aid programs for the blind.

During the course of morning business, Ralph Doud, of Grand Island, and Larry Wallace, of North Platte, who are both directors, received much acclaim when it was announced that they were paying all of their own national Convention expenses, which is a great saving to the NFB exchequer.

Judy Irvig, volunteer worker for the tape department of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at Lincoln, talked about the great innovations in cassettes and players to be available soon. Tom Ryan and Rex Bryan from the Placement Division of the State Services for the Visually Impaired, gave encouraging reports regarding job developments. Questions asked from the floor were answered willingly and to the satisfaction of all.

The first speaker of the afternoon session was the new Mayor of Omaha, the Honorable Edward Zorinsky, who told us that one of his first functions in office was to propel himself in a wheelchair to the Greyhound Bus Depot to acquaint himself with the problems facing the handicapped in that area. His announcement that he will hire the handicapped was well received. Transportation problems were discussed.

Bruce Hansen, Field Representative from the Social Security Administration, talked about the SSI program which created much discussion. The program as it now reads is not desirable for any hardship case. Reed DeVoe, Director of the Equal

Opportunities Commission, spoke on L.B. 266 and what it will mean to the blind. Local chapter reports were given by the four presidents, Larry Wallace, Ralph Doud, Karen Koeling, and Verda Auen.

The following were elected to office: first vice-president, Ralph Doud, by acclamation; second vice-president, Karen Koeling; one-year board member, Bill Pfeiffer. Elected as two-year board members were Dennis Lippold and Sam Gibilisco. Dick Parker and Dick Gulizia were elected by acclamation as delegate and alternate delegate, respectively, to the national Convention in New York.

After much discussion pro and con, a motion was adopted to rescind the resolution passed by the executive board at the October 1972 meeting, which refused membership in NFB to any employee of the State Services for the Visually Impaired.

Sylvester Nemmers announced the "NAC Tracker" bus leaving from Des Moines for Chicago on June 19 to demonstrate there against NAC. Our President Parker was elected a delegate and if he is unable to go, we will name an alternate. Mr. Nemmers also informed us of bus and plane arrangements from Des Moines going to the national Convention.

Secretary Auen asked for a vote of confidence for President Parker, stating: "The success of any organization depends on full cooperation from its members and dispensing with personality conflicts." The request received a most generous response. The meeting adjourned after no suggestions were forthcoming for the 1974 convention site.

The banquet followed the meeting, and Senator Duke Snyder and Perry Sundquist were speakers. Senator Snyder graciously accepted a certificate of appreciation awarded him by the NFB of Nebraska in a touching ceremony led by President Parker; the latter also pinned Senator Snyder with Mr. Parker's personal NFB pin.

Many door prizes were drawn and given to happy recipients all during the day's and evening's session. Grand prize was a fifty-dollar-bill given by the Tri-County Chapter.

A MONTANA INDUSTRY IS THINKING OF YOU

by
R. K. Richardson

[Editor's Note.—Mr. Richardson is past president of the Montana Association for the Blind.]

Recently I had a most delightful and thrilling experience. I met with two young engineers of Development Technology, Inc., of Bozeman, Montana. As the name implies, DTI develops, with its ninety-six highly trained engineers and technicians, many technical and sophisticated instruments for the benefit and use of mankind. They are now thinking of ways to aid the blind and they are making some progress.

One of their latest developments is an information system which can be of great value to the blind as well as the sighted public.

Their INFO System is a small, low-power,

short-range AM radio station. In fact, it is smaller than the new talking-book machines. This miniature radio station can be operated on house power or on batteries. This means that it may be used either as a stationary or as a portable and mobile unit.

The only equipment needed to pick up transmitted information messages is a car radio or a small transistor radio, which is standard equipment for all of us who are blind. The messages can be up to ten minutes on a tape which plays continuously over any given period of time. It can also be programmed from a live microphone or from any recorded tape. This unique INFO System also doubles as a sound system for sports events or at other public gatherings whether they be outdoors or indoors.

"Now," you may ask, "how can the INFO System help the blind in particular and the sighted public in general?"

Easy; when the printed word is replaced by the spoken word. Such uses are many and varied.

The first INFO System was used near beautiful Whitefish, Montana, in the summer of 1969. Now there are many at interstate highway rest areas. They call the attention of tourists to points of historical significance, scenic and recreational attractions, commercial services available, local activities, and provide other information about the immediate area. There are thirty-nine of these units in operation plus one at each of the five entrances to Yellowstone National Park. This is almost like having your own naturalist along to describe the beauty, as well as the how, when, where, and why of

the area you are in.

You can visit a large shopping center and be directed to the different stores and be informed of their specials of the day, as well as where they are located. Large hotels may use INFO Systems to direct you through their facilities and call attention to their many services. The State of California is using INFO Systems to direct traffic on their congested highways. Anywhere a large, localized radio audience, permanent or mobile, is found, an INFO System transmitter can be used to inform without the printed word.

It was a delightful experience to have this INFO System demonstrated to me. It delivers pertinent and concise information via the spoken word, at the very time and place it is most desired or needed. Even the sighted public has embraced it with enthusiasm. Too often they find the message they are seeking gets lost in a maze of bewildering, unsightly billboards.

These two young DTI engineers do not wish to rest on their laurels. They want the ideas of all blind people on how they can better be served by the INFO System. This unique system of communication will be demonstrated at the State convention of the Montana Association for the Blind in Bozeman this summer. Its many features will be explained and everyone interested will have an opportunity to ask questions as to how it may serve all blind people.

I am sure that after the demonstration those at the convention will be equally as enthusiastic as I am over the many possibilities this product of modern engineering has for the blind.

A FORWARD-LOOKING RESOLUTION

[Editor's Note.—The following resolution was adopted by the Senate of the Washington State Legislature and promises a brighter outlook for the blind in that State in the future.]

SENATE RESOLUTION 1973-64

WHEREAS realizing that the Legislature of the State of Washington is earnestly working for the improvement of programs for the blind,

WHEREAS realizing that the National Federation of the Blind of the State of Washington is proposing the establishment of a State commission for the blind,

WHEREAS realizing there exists a controversy as to the necessity of establishment of such a commission:

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the senate empower a committee under the direction of the Legislative Council or the appropriate committee to study the feasibility of the establishment of such a commission,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in this study the committee or delegates thereof examine facilities and programs now existing in the State of Washington and similar commissions in the various States with particular attention to be given rehabilitation and job-training and placement efforts and results,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that delegates of the committee be sent to the Iowa Commission in Des Moines to study the Iowa program and report their

findings to the committee,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the senate take action on the establishment of such a State commission as soon as practical after receiving the report of the committee,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the National Federation of the Blind of Washington.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by
Mae Coutts

[Editor's Note.—Mae Coutts is well known to Federationists. She is the wife of NFB Second Vice-President James Coutts.]

No-fry Doughnuts

2 packages Red Star yeast
1½ cups warm water
1½ cups lukewarm milk
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
2 eggs
¼ cup butter or margarine, melted
1/3 cup shortening
4½ cups Gold Medal flour

Mix two cups of flour with all the rest of the ingredients. Blend well, stir in remaining flour, and let the mixture rise in a warm place. Cut into doughnuts with a spatula and place two inches apart on a cookie sheet. Allow to rise until double in size (about twenty minutes), then bake eight to ten minutes in an oven heated to

425 degrees.

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MONITOR MINIATURES

The NFB of Washington reports that its commission bill was ready for passage by the legislature but the President's veto of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has kept it in committee. It is felt that the bill has an excellent chance of passage during the September session of the legislature. In the meantime, the affiliate was successful in securing passage of its Civil Rights for the Blind bill.

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The NFB of Illinois states that recently some of its officers met with the assistant to the Governor for a general discussion of the problems experienced by blind clients of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in their relationship with that agency's staff. The Governor's assistant was most receptive to the comments, saying that she had heard similar comments from other groups of DVR clients, and confessed that in her own discussions with the agency director she had detected a strong undercurrent of paternalism, condescension, and sheer indifference toward the client. The officers of the NFB of Illinois are hopeful that the Governor will, in the near future, be in a position to inject some new blood into DVR and thereby help reestablish its services on a basis of administrative efficiency and official responsiveness.

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A controversial work-for-welfare program

of California's 1971 Welfare Reform Act was ruled unconstitutional by a Federal judge in Los Angeles. In his decision, Federal District Court Judge Warren J. Ferguson said that "the community work experience program sanctions a system which violates the Due Process Clause in that it permits sanctions against those who challenge its legality and application." The State will appeal the ruling. The program, which requires able-bodied recipients to work eighty hours a month at community service jobs, started June 7, 1972, one day after then HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson granted California a waiver of Federal laws. The pilot program has been operating in seven of California's fifty-eight counties. The work-for-welfare program was originally scheduled to operate in thirty-five primarily northern California counties, but urban counties balked at the cost of the program.

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Here are some excerpts from a jubilant issue of the *Connecticut Blind Federationist* (published by the NFB of Connecticut): "On Friday, May 25, 1973, Governor Thomas Meskill formally signed into law the bill for which we have worked so diligently, H.B. 8251, 'An Act Concerning the Rights of the Blind and Otherwise Physically Disabled.' This piece of legislation will take effect on October 1, 1973." State President Howard May comments on this event: "Our civil rights bill has been signed into law. We helped stop the 'use' bill in committee which would have set up a 'sheltered workshop.' Services of the library for the blind in Connecticut seem to be restored. The Lions' 'tactile gallery' at the Wadsworth Atheneum has dropped the word 'blind' from its name. We have helped a number of individuals to obtain services from the

State agency. The State agencies and assembly are becoming aware that we are here. If about one hundred members of the NFB of Connecticut can do this, how much more could two hundred or five hundred members achieve!"

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Six students of the Washington State School for the Blind, equipped with ropes and other gear, recently climbed the tallest mountain in Oregon, the 11,235-foot, snow-capped Mount Hood. Many mountain climbers explain their hobby by saying, simply, they do it because the mountain is there. But these blind youngsters wanted to know what a mountain was like.

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Figures released by the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress reveal that less than twenty-five percent of blind persons received library services in seventeen States. In only twelve States were more than forty percent of blind persons receiving library services, and in only six States were more than fifty percent on library lists. The percentage served ranged from nine percent in one State to seventy-seven percent in another. The fact is that more than two-thirds of the States are probably reaching less than forty percent of their legally blind persons. The Division feels that no State should be satisfied with reaching less than fifty percent of its blind population with library services, but a more reasonable goal would be a readership of at least sixty to seventy-five percent.

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A bill proposed by New York Governor

Nelson Rockefeller to prepare the way for a State take-over of the administration of New York City's welfare system was enacted by the New York State Legislature. The measure will create a special division within the Governor's Office to prepare for central welfare computerization. Under the measure steps will be taken to move toward a centralized State administration of the relief and Medicaid systems by establishing a "demonstration project" in New York City's welfare operation, which includes seventy percent of the State's welfare rolls.

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The Blind Nevadan, publication of the NFB of Nevada, reports great legislative gains in 1973. First and foremost was the passage by the legislature, and signing by the Governor, of a bill establishing a flat Aid to the Blind grant of \$215 a month, less nonexempt income. This culminates years of hard work on the affiliate's part to improve the hitherto inadequate grant of Aid to the Blind in the State. The new law becomes effective on January 1, 1974. A second legislative breakthrough was achieved when the legislature removed from the Civil Service the position of Director of State Services for the Blind, who will henceforth be appointed and continue in his position at the discretion of the head of the State's rehabilitation and health department, and of the Governor. Finally, the department head promised to appoint a blind person to the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee. This was quite a year, Nevada; and we extend our warm congratulations on your outstanding successes.

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Listen, publication of the Carroll

Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired, in Massachusetts, reports that an increasing number of blind people are entering the world of mechanics. Ranging from motorcycle specialists to automatic-transmission experts, the new mechanics are from many parts of the country, vary considerably in age, and are both congenitally and adventitiously blind.

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A House subcommittee recently gave unanimous approval to a measure, twice vetoed by President Nixon, which would extend vocational rehabilitation programs. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 would extend the major programs of grants to State rehabilitation agencies at a level of \$660,000,000 for fiscal year 1974 and \$690,000,000 for fiscal year 1975. The bill would insure that no State would be granted less money than it currently receives. It is a compromise bill which it is hoped will win White House approval.

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The Potomac Federation of the Blind, a chapter of the NFB of Virginia, has just published a most interesting booklet for new members and prospective members. It begins with a friendly letter from the president explaining something about the local, State, and national organizations of the NFB. The constitution and bylaws of the chapter are printed next. Then follows a discussion of the many ways in which the NFB helps blind people, and a printing of the Model White Cane Law of Virginia. Other chapters and State affiliates who might wish to see this booklet, and perhaps use it as a model, can obtain copies by writing to the chapter's president, Jack Weakley, General Delivery, Wyers Cave,

Virginia 22801.

* * * * *

The recent proposal by the President to the Congress to increase the amount individuals must pay under the Medicare program would result in a greatly increased financial burden for millions of older Americans. It would force Medicare patients not only to pay for the actual hospital room and board charges for the first day but also ten percent of all subsequent room and board costs. Since the average hospital stay for Medicare patients is thirteen days, this proposal would mean a significant increase for the average patient and an enormous increase for those living in areas with higher-than-average hospital costs. The proposal would also increase significantly the cost of treatment by a doctor. Under the present system the patient pays the first sixty dollars of his doctor bill and twenty percent of the remainder. If the Medicare cutback is approved, the patient would pay the first eighty-five dollars and twenty-five percent of the remainder. This would constitute an increase of more than twenty-seven percent in the cost of a doctor to the Medicare patient.

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In a recent broadcast, Jack Anderson, the noted columnist, stated: "For years, blind people have operated newstands and vending machines in Federal buildings around the country. They have usually worked successfully alongside the powerful Government cafeterias. But in recent months, the cafeteria managers have been complaining, increasingly, that the blind concessionaires are stealing their business. Last fall, cafeteria managers even tried to

eliminate some of their blind competitors. I have obtained documents which show how the cafeteria men quietly pressured the General Services Administration to draft a new regulation designed—and I quote—‘to decrease the competition with the cafeterias.’ The GSA tried to sneak this proposal past the blind concessionaires. But the law requires new regulations to be issued in the *Federal Register*. The GSA explained in the *Federal Register* that the regulation was based on detailed studies which showed vending machines ‘in competition with cafeterias, which may cause higher prices.’ Well, California’s Congressman Phil Burton asked that the detailed studies be made public. Burton’s staff was flabbergasted to discover that the GSA had no such studies. The alleged studies apparently were nothing more than blind man’s bluff.”

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The Indiana Council of the Blind cordially invites all persons involved or interested in the organized blind movement to attend its twentieth annual convention.

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The convention will be held September 14-16, at the Campus Inn, 1920 Northwestern Avenue, West Lafayette, Indiana 49706. Registration will take place Friday afternoon and on Saturday from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. The registration fee is one dollar. The main program will take place Saturday, climaxed by a banquet Saturday evening for which tickets are five dollars. There will be a board of directors meeting Friday evening and maybe a Legislative Committee meeting. There will be a business session Sunday morning. Although everyone is welcome to join the organization, it is not necessary to join in order to attend the convention.

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The NFB of Ohio will hold its twenty-seventh annual convention at the Stratford Ramada Inn, at 330 West First Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402, October 19-21. The executive board meetings will be held on Thursday, October 18, 1973. All meetings are open to observers except the nominating committee meeting.

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